

This legislation is not punitive. It is an effort to make the District a jewel of the Nation. It is an effort by us to extend a hand to the new mayor and city council in an effort to work on a truly bipartisan basis to resolve a long festering problem. This is an effort to give the prisoners at Lorton hope and an opportunity to rehabilitate themselves so that they can become productive members of society. Last, it is an effort to remove a dangerously malfunctioning facility from Virginia which poses concerns for residents of Fairfax and Prince William Counties.

I believe that the D.C. Department of Corrections has done a good job with limited resources and my remarks today are not meant in any way to criticize them. I believe, however, that nothing short of radical reform is required. This is not a new issue. I introduced legislation in the 102nd and 103d Congresses to address this problem. Unfortunately, that legislation received little attention. The new Congress, however, presents us with a new opportunity to move this bill. I am now prepared to work with the mayor and city council on embarking on an ambitious plan to stop the revolving crime door at Lorton. It is in the interest of the District of Columbia, Fairfax County, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the Federal Government to cooperate in resolving the problems at Lorton. As partners, contributing to the reform of this system, these goals can be accomplished.

Lorton prison is a finishing school for criminals. Recidivism rates among Lorton inmates have been reported as high as 90 percent. A 1987 U.S. General Accounting Office [GAO] study found that nearly 7 of 10 adult inmates living at Lorton at the time of the study had previously been convicted of a felony offense in the District of Columbia and incarcerated at Lorton. About one-third of the adult inmates have been previously convicted and incarcerated at Lorton more than once. The sample used by the GAO was necessarily restrictive which means figures of recidivism are most likely higher.

Inmates should not leave the confines of Lorton prepared with master's degrees in drug trafficking, assault, and murder. Unfortunately, rehabilitation programs such as industry work programs, vocational training programs, GED education programs, and drug rehabilitation programs are woefully inadequate. Instead of participating in rehabilitation programs, many inmates only lift weights or play basketball all day, wander the grounds of the central facility aimlessly and unsupervised, watch mindnumbing hour after mindnumbing hour of television, and perfect their deviant criminal skills.

I have made many trips to the prison. Years ago I participated in a prisoner counseling program called Man-to-Man. From that experience I learned that one can't put a man behind bars for years, fail to give him work, fail to give him skills, fail to offer the opportunity for him to educate himself, fail to lend structure to his life and expect him to reemerge a changed person.

In 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt established a commission to study overcrowding at the District of Columbia's jail and to make recommendations to correct overcrowding at the District of Columbia's jail. In providing Congress with the results of that Commission's work in 1909, President Roosevelt wrote:

The report sets forth vividly the really outrageous conditions in the workhouse and jail. The overcrowding is great in the workhouse, and greater still in the jail where, of the 600 inmates, 500 are serving sentences in absolute idleness, with no employment and no exercise. * * * It is no longer a question as to what shall be done, but only a question whether something shall be done, for it is quite impossible that the existing condition should continue. The present antiquated and unsatisfactory plan ought not to be considered for a moment.

The parallels between the present situation and those described by President Roosevelt in 1908 are remarkable. Today, more than 85 years later, District of Columbia prisoners still serve their sentences in absolute idleness and many of the concerns that led to the establishment of Lorton 85 years ago still exist.

Idleness results in unmanageable prisoners. Prison guards fear personal injury; thus they ease the tense situation by allowing prisoners free reign to conduct their daily business. Inmates make unsupervised phone calls to the outside and conduct illegal activity from behind the walls. Inmates control the use of the phones and sell phone time to one another. Inmates are not even required to wear similar prison uniforms.

Many youthful offenders view matriculation to Lorton as a right-of-passage. Many of their friends and relatives have passed through the institution and made useful contacts for future criminal activity, thereby perfecting their criminal skills so that, upon release, they are more proficient at exploiting the innocent and vulnerable. In simple terms these individuals are committing serious crimes, serving time at Lorton, leaving Lorton and returning to the District of Columbia to commit more crimes.

The news is littered with stories of former residents of Lorton who commit further acts of violence upon release. The Washington, DC, community was horrified by the story of the shooting of veteran D.C. police officer Hank Daley and FBI special agents Martha Dixon Martinez and John Michael Miller at the D.C. police headquarters. The suspect in that senseless shooting served time at Lorton. We were also stunned by the report of the senseless murder of young Meredith Miller in a carjacking outside her Arlington apartment house. One suspect in the murder, who had a record of attempted burglary, unlawful entry, theft, destruction of public property, possession of drugs, and parole violations, had been at Lorton. A number of other serious crimes have been perpetrated by former Lorton residents.

While there are many instances of former Lorton inmates wreaking havoc when they are released, there are also many untold stories of dangerous crimes which occur inside the prison. According to court documents, an inmate was playing basketball while wearing a gold chain around his neck worth \$1,200, two diamond rings worth \$300 a piece, and a watch worth \$100. When the inmate left the gymnasium, he was accosted by two masked inmates, was stabbed and robbed. It is unthinkable, unbelievable, irresponsible, and totally inappropriate that this inmate had jewelry in the first place, and second that this violent attack even occurred.

Originally, Lorton was designed as a workcamp for misdemeanants and drunkards, in which men lived and worked side by side in dormitories in an effort to rehabilitate themselves. Today, Lorton's facilities are out-

moded, outdated, and its present use is contrary to the purposes for which it was originally intended. The same dormitories which were designed to hold nonviolent, minimum security prisoners currently house up to 150 notoriously dangerous convicts. Making matters worse, these dangerous men are guarded by one unarmed guard. In some circumstances they go unguarded. I have heard story after story of inmates attacking inmates and guards.

These are not isolated incidents. Every year, there are many murders, assaults, and malicious woundings in the prison. Drugs are as easy to obtain as procuring them on the street. Guards deal in narcotics or they look the other way—partly because some are corrupt, partly because some don't care, and partly because some know there is little control and they are fearful of a riot. The problems are so bad that there are seven FBI agents and three assistant U.S. attorneys who work on criminal investigations and prosecutions at Lorton.

Because the prison budget is so strained, there has been public discussion that District officials may consider closing one facility, thereby exacerbating overcrowding and its related dangers. They may close several guard towers, they may return hundreds of felons now in Federal facilities on a reimbursable basis and other States' facilities to Lorton, or may cut back further on staff. I believe the time is right and the time is now for Congress to address these important issues in partnership with the mayor and city council, and solve these daunting problems.

Mr. Speaker, clearly this reform agenda is ambitious. This situation is such that it requires a bold new direction. President William Howard Taft, who succeeded Theodore Roosevelt as President, commented on the D.C. jail in 1909:

It is a reproach to the National Government that almost under the shadow of the Capitol dome prisoners should be confined in a building destitute of the ordinary decent appliances requisite to cleanliness and sanitary conditions.

That condition, and worse still exists today at Lorton. This bill is the first step in the process to reform D.C. prisoners, combat crime in the District, and renew Washington, DC.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I would like to reiterate my intention to reach out to all the interested parties to forge a win-win proposal for the District, Virginia, and the inmates who live in Lorton. I would like to thank all those people who are working toward this common goal, including William Moschella of my staff who has worked tirelessly for several years on a solution to this challenging problem.

LORTON CORRECTIONAL COMPLEX CLOSURE ACT

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 9, 1995

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, this year, we have a real opportunity to resolve the issue of the Lorton prison.

When Lorton was first constructed, it was intended to house 60 inmates in rural Fairfax County. Today, the Lorton correctional complex is a 3,000 acre site in suburban Fairfax

County housing more than 7,000 prisoners. Fairfax County can no longer safely house a prison. The communities surrounding the prison have grown too large and as they continue to press on the boundaries of the prison, the safety of the residents is being compromised.

Another important issue driving this legislation is the question of whether resources are available within the District of Columbia to operate a large prison. The District is not a State. It does not have the resources or the tax base to manage State functions such as operating prisons. In the past 10 years, the population of the prison has more than doubled while the budget has remained constant. The D.C. Department of Corrections is jamming prisoners into cells and dormitories that cannot correctly house them. We have heard reports of unsafe housing practices at the Lorton facility, where high security prisoners are being kept in dormitory style facilities. We have also heard reports of improper safety procedures, where there are not enough guards to correctly and safely monitor the prison. The Lorton prison has literally become a power keg with too many prisoners in too little room with too little supervision. We should not and cannot wait for an incident to occur before we act. We should not put our constituents who live near the prison or who work at the prison at such risk.

In the mid-1980's, Jack Anderson wrote a column calling the Lorton prison a "finishing school" for criminals. Since that time, the problem has become worse. The D.C. Department of Corrections cannot afford to offer even the most basic rehabilitation services. Inmates who leave the system are no better than when they entered. In many cases, they are worse off. It is no coincidence that on the same day last month, articles ran in the newspapers reporting the cancellation of the drug treatment program in Lorton and the arrest of a guard trying to bring crack cocaine into the complex.

It is simply unacceptable for us to allow this situation to continue. Our communities deserve to be free of crime, not subject to criminals who continue to move in and out of the system. The inmates themselves should be given the tools to cure their addictions and begin their lives anew, free of crime. The current situation does little to deter or prevent crime or recidivism. With this legislation, we have the opportunity to move the District's prisoners into a prison system which rehabilitates inmates, treats drug abuse, and breaks the cycle of crime and recidivism. We must seize that opportunity.

This has been and will continue to be a true bipartisan effort. The legislation we are introducing combines the best pieces of previous efforts and improves upon them. It offers a rational and realistic method for closing the facility that does not penalize the District of Columbia. It establishes the mechanism for the local community to determine the future of the property. Through the Commission that this legislation establishes, the local community can ensure that the area's open spaces are kept and the impact on local traffic is minimized.

We have an historic opportunity to work together and close the Lorton facility. We must take advantage of this opportunity.

[Press Release, Jan. 9, 1995]

MORAN, WOLF, DAVIS INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO CLOSE LORTON PRISON

WASHINGTON, DC.—Today, U.S. Representatives Jim Moran, Frank Wolf and Tom Davis introduced legislation to close the Lorton Correctional Complex and relocate the current inmates to existing federal prisons.

"This year, we have a real opportunity to resolve the issue of the prison at Lorton," Moran said. "Today, the Lorton Correctional Complex is a 3,000 acre site in suburban Fairfax County housing more than 7,000 prisoners. In the last decade, the communities surrounding the prison have grown larger. The safety of the residents is being compromised—the prison must be closed."

The legislation calls for an eleven member commission that would oversee the closing of Lorton and allow those concerned about development of the property to have a voice in the process. Many Lorton residents fear that if the facility is closed, it will be replaced with 3,000 acres of houses, roads and traffic that will choke the area with congestion. Moran explained, "I understand their concerns, but I do not think that we should continue an intolerable situation because we fear the alternative."

Rep. Moran had introduced legislation during the 103rd Congress that would turn control of Lorton over to the Federal Bureau of Prisons. He feels that this legislation, introduced by all three Northern Virginia legislators, combines the best pieces of previous efforts and improves upon them. "This legislation offers a rational and realistic method for closing the facility that does not penalize the District of Columbia and establishes a mechanism for the local community to determine the future of the property," Moran said. "This is an historic opportunity to work together to close this facility. We must take advantage of it."

THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AUTISM SOCIETY OF AMERICA AND NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS WEEK

HON. RICHARD A. GEPHARDT

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 9, 1995

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize the Autism Society of America on its 30th anniversary. The timing of this tribute is no accident. This week, January 9–15, is National Autism Awareness Week, and no organization has done more to promote awareness of autism than the Autism Society of America.

The mission statement of the society reflects its commitment to the autism population:

The Autism Society of America exists to promote lifelong access and opportunity for all individuals within the autism spectrum and their families, through education, advocacy, the promotion of research and increased public awareness, to be fully participating, including members of their community.

In 1994, the national office of the society responded to over 12,000 requests from parents, relatives, teachers, doctors, service providers, and professionals wanting information on topics like education, research, programs, laws, and family-coping strategies—all provided free of charge. Each week, the national office handles over 200 telephone calls on its toll-free line from parents and professionals wanting information, advice, and advocacy.

With over 200 chapters nationwide, run by parent volunteers, caregivers, parents, and family members are offered much-needed information, referrals, and support.

In addition to these efforts, the Autism Society of America also runs mail order bookstores housing the largest collection of classic and contemporary works on autism; annually publishes six issues of the *Advocate*, a comprehensive national newsletter on the latest developments in the area of autism; and sponsors an annual conference at which experts and parents from all across the country join for 4 full days of seminars, presentations, workshops, and research findings.

Finally, the Autism Society of America has been a persistent voice on Capitol Hill, advocating for increased Federal commitment to biomedical research. Last year, the society successfully worked with the National Institutes of Health to arrange for the first-ever workshop on autism, which is scheduled for this spring.

Mr. Speaker, as we observe National Autism Awareness Week, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Autism Society of America for its 30 years of service.

RETIREMENT OF GEORGE H. ROBINSON

HON. RONALD D. COLEMAN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 9, 1995

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, a highly respected employee of the Small Business Administration, Mr. George H. Robinson, will be retiring after 31 years of devoted public service to the SBA and the small business community. The exemplary career of Mr. Robinson, the Assistant Administrator for Equal Employment Opportunity and Civil Rights Compliance since 1974, is most deserving of the praise and recognition of this body. His staunch advocacy and leadership in the struggle for efficiency and fairness in Government service has made a difference to countless people, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to work and achieve and advance according to their abilities and accomplishments.

George Robinson has displayed such skill and devotion all his life. A graduate of Oberlin College, he began his career with the Urban League, working to break down racial discrimination in employment by promoting fair employment legislation on the State and city levels and by forging friendships and partnerships with corporate officials.

As chairman of the Northern New Jersey March on Washington Committee in 1941, George and others persuaded Franklin Roosevelt to establish the wartime Fair Employment Practices Commission. His work for this cause caught the attention of the Wright Aeronautical Corp. where he was brought on to help direct the hiring and supervision of 8,000 minority workers.

It was this commitment to the cause of equal opportunity and the chance to help create jobs in economically depressed areas through the Area Redevelopment Act that brought George Robinson to the SBA in the